

State Senator

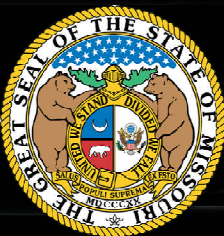
Larry Gene Taylor

LARRY
GENE
TAYLOR
1953-2005

REMEMBERING
SEN. TAYLOR

STATEWIDE ISSUES
BROUGHT HOME

BILLS TO
PROTECT YOU



District 29



MISSOURI SENATE
SENATOR MICHAEL R. GIBBONS
 President Pro Tem

STATE CAPITOL, ROOM 326
 573-751-2853
 DISTRICT PHONE: 314-966-2526

COMMITTEES:
 Administration—Chairman
 Gubernatorial Appointments—Chairman
 Rules, Joint Rules, Resolutions and Ethics
 Pensions, Veterans' Affairs and General Laws

Dear Friends,
 The entire Senate family was shocked to learn of the sudden passing of a true gentleman, our friend and colleague, Sen. Larry Gene Taylor. We continue to extend our sympathies to Sen. Taylor's wife, Gay, and their children and grandchildren.
 Sen. Taylor was a valuable member of the Senate. He hit the ground running and had an excellent first session after serving in the House of Representatives. Larry's work benefited you, the constituents of the 29th Senatorial district, as well as all Missourians.

Before Sen. Taylor's passing this summer, he had spent many hours working with our Senate Communications staff compiling this newsletter. Sen. Taylor understood the importance of informing constituents of legislation that affects their lives. I feel it is important that you, the constituents of his district, continue to have the opportunity to learn of the work Sen. Taylor and the Missouri General Assembly accomplished during this year's legislative session.

Sen. Taylor was proud to represent Southwest Missouri during both his time in the House, and in his role as senator to which he was elected just one short year ago. Although his time in the Senate was brief, his presence will be missed. Sen. Taylor always had a smile; it was his hallmark. The Senate halls and floor will be more somber without it. We will also miss the strong Ozark values he brought to debate and to all of his actions. We will strive to build upon his legacy of bringing these common-sense values to the rest of the state.

I invite you to read this newsletter to better know the role Sen. Taylor played in sharing your voice in our democratic process. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact Sen. Taylor's assistants, Janet Ritter and Pam Gilmore, who are available to assist you. The 29th District office phone number is (573) 751-9806.

Yours Truly,

Michael R. Gibbons

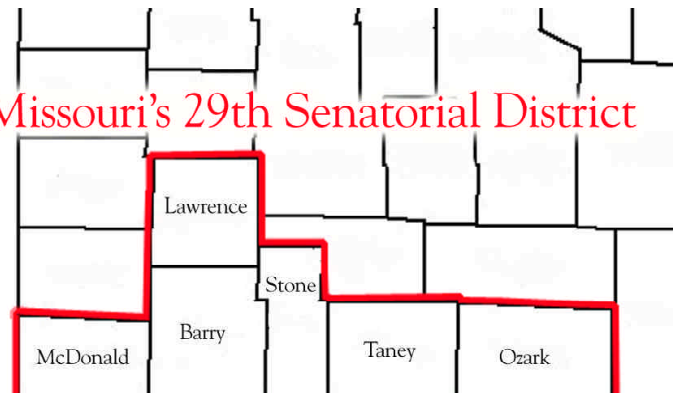
Michael R. Gibbons
 Senate President Pro Tem

Senate Representation

Under our constitution, legislative and congressional boundaries must be redrawn after each decennial census to ensure equal representation in government for all citizens. In the Missouri Senate, each district is made up of approximately 160,000 constituents.

As a result of population shifts in southwest Missouri over the past decade, the 29th District lines were redrawn to include Lawrence, McDonald, Barry, Stone, Taney and Ozark counties. But because state senate terms last for four years, the change in boundaries didn't become official until after the 2004 general election. A map showing the new district boundaries is shown above.

Missouri's 29th Senatorial District



20th District Matters

A Fitting Name



The Senate spent Valentine's Day this year on the floor of the upper chamber in the first all-night debate of the session, which resulted in renaming Southwest Missouri State University as Missouri State University. The name change, which takes effect in August, will boost the school's ability to attract out-of-state students and qualified staff.

Similar legislative attempts for the past two decades have been unsuccessful. Governor Blunt, a Springfield native, opened his arms to this legislation and on March 17, when SMSU celebrated its 100th anniversary, the bill was signed into law.

Congratulations to the new Missouri State University!

Protecting Democracy

The right to vote is an inalienable privilege for citizens of the United States. The State Legislature moved to protect this cornerstone of our democracy by approving my amendment to an omnibus crime bill. The amendment prevents non-U.S. citizens from diluting the value of the right to vote and requires voting registrants to show proof of U.S. citizenship.

The past two centuries have been rife with one group or another fighting for the right to vote. Illegal immigrants and non-U.S. citizens do not have the right to voice their political opinions at Missouri's polls. A citizen is a citizen, and if that citizenship does not exist, neither should the right to vote.

Letting Voters Decide

To give citizens direct control over their tax dollars, we passed Senate Joint Resolution 1, which lets voters decide every 10 years whether to extend or end the one-tenth-of-a-cent sales tax that goes toward state park maintenance and soil and water conservation efforts.

Any change that has to do with taxes is a change to the constitution and therefore is only possible with voter approval. The current tax is scheduled to expire in 2008.

You will get to vote on the constitutional amendment in 2006. This resolution allows you to hold the government accountable. If you don't want to prolong the tax that goes toward protecting our state's soil and water conservation efforts, as well as preserve our state parks, you don't have to vote for it. What is important here is that you get to choose.

Successfully Stopped

Sometimes, legislative success is not marked by what does pass, but by what doesn't pass. Senate Bill 187, which aimed at lifting restrictions on building and expanding concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), was thankfully killed in the House.

Shrouded in claims that it was an environmentally friendly bill, SB 187 would have set a terrible precedent for rural Missouri by freeing large-scale farms from regulation.

Only Missouri's biggest farm operators, (more than 7,000 cows or 17,500 hogs, for example) would have had to notify local officials and neighbors if they wanted to build a new or expand an existing operation.

An operation with 6,999 bovines would be able to produce offensive smells and noise with no worries of being locally regulated.

Weakening regulations on CAFOs tears authority away from the local governments and will only have a negative effect on county residents' health and environment.

By NOT passing the bill, we have protected traditional family farms and the quality of our air and water. This bill might show up again, and I encourage you to contest it.



A Business-Friendly Missouri

Reforming our tort law and workers' compensation system

Straightening Out Tort Law

Now there is a finer balance between culpability and financial responsibility in Missouri's system of civil liability, also known as tort law.

With a \$350,000 cap on damages allocated for pain and suffering in civil suit cases (medical malpractice, product liability, etc.), we have done away with the possibility of juries handing out outrageous awards, which drive insurance premiums up.

Costly insurance forces businesses to move out of state and doctors to stop practicing high-risk procedures in Missouri.

We also put a stop to "venue

shopping," a practice in which trials are moved to jurisdictions known for awarding plaintiffs with the most generous amounts.

Another issue we dealt with was the "joint and several liability" clause, which allows one defendant to be held financially liable for anything other liable defendants are unable to pay.

To bring proportionate fairness to the system, defendants will now be responsible for economic damages beyond their percentage of liability only if the jury determined them to bear more than 50



Sen. Larry Gene Taylor and Sen. Delbert Scott discuss the provisions of the tort legislation.

percent of fault, and the other defendant(s) cannot cover their part.

These changes guarantee a more proportionate distribution of liability for the defendant and justice for the plaintiff.

Reinforcing a Double-Sided Safety Net

We have also made improvements to Missouri's workers' compensation laws.

Our workers' compensation system was established in 1925 to shield employers from unpredictable civil lawsuits from injured workers and to offer an organized process through which injured workers could receive compensation for work-related injuries.

The system is undoubtedly necessary for both the employee and

employer, but was in need of fine-tuning.

The new law will stabilize the workers' compensation program by establishing a series of checks and balances to help weed out fraudulent claims without hampering the processing of legitimate claims.

Now, to be compensated, a workplace accident must be the prevailing, rather than the substantial, factor in causing the condition.

The measure also sets

ceilings on benefits for preexisting conditions worsened from work-related injuries and disallows claims for injuries occurring while driving to or from work.

This new law will ensure that employees genuinely hurt in the workplace will be compensated, but it also enables employers to rely on affordable workers' compensation coverage. Reforms such as these make it easier to create, do and grow business in Missouri.

Investing in Education

We rewrote the public school “foundation formula” to provide a more adequate and equitable education to every child in Missouri. For years Missouri has touted education as its top priority, but due to a changing economy, the state has outgrown the current formula.

The new school-funding plan sets a minimum amount the state has to spend per pupil and adjusts the figure according to each district’s special needs and costs of living. The plan calls for an annual increase of at least \$800 million to be phased in over the next seven years. Smaller school districts will have access to \$15 million in grant money, and urban school districts will receive additional money to cover higher labor costs.

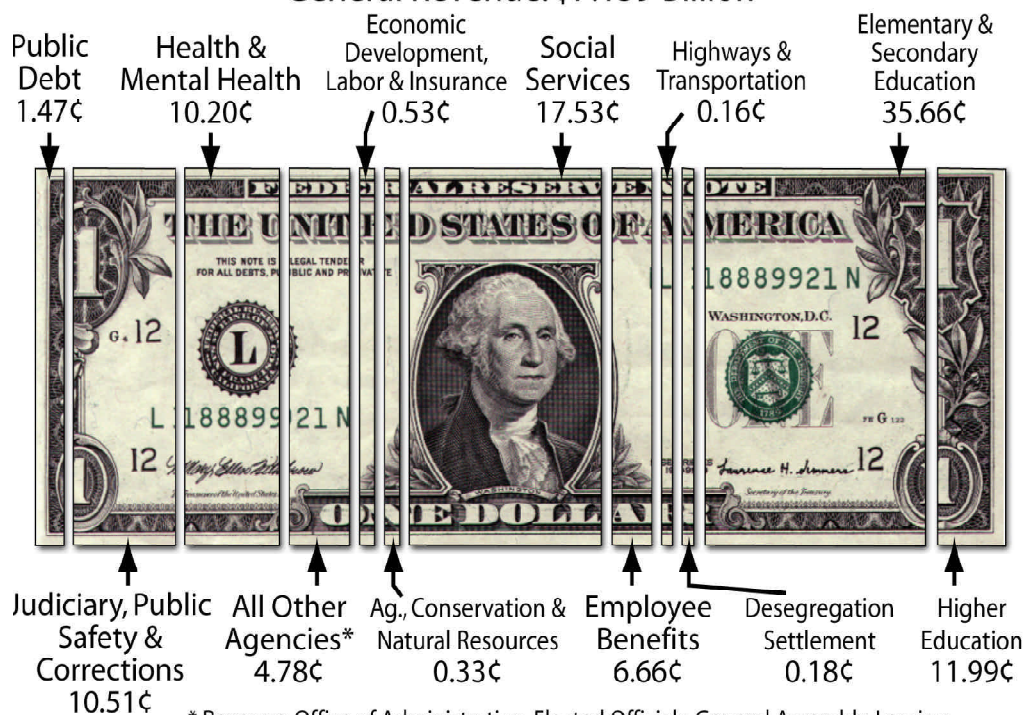


How your school district will fare under the new funding formula:

| | FY 2006 | FY 2007 |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| COUNTY | Current Formula | New Formula |
| Barry Co. | \$25,946,853 | \$27,560,035 |
| Lawrence Co. | \$21,121,069 | \$21,860,025 |
| McDonald Co. | \$12,332,482 | \$13,097,572 |
| Ozark Co. | \$5,774,085 | \$5,967,275 |
| Stone Co. | \$11,057,178 | \$11,411,140 |
| Taney Co. | \$13,254,194 | \$13,531,323 |

Where does a Mi\$\$ouri dollar go?

FY 2006 After Veto Missouri Operating Appropriations
General Revenue: \$7.159 Billion



* Revenue, Office of Administration, Elected Officials, General Assembly, Leasing

Laws of Protection

Protecting the innocent from drunk drivers



To clearly send the message that drunk driving is inexcusable, we granted final passage to SB 37.

Under the bill, the penalty for involuntary manslaughter in the first degree is increased to a Class B, rather than Class C, felony if a driver has a blood alcohol content (BAC) level between .08 and .18 and causes the death of any person who is not a

passenger, or causes the deaths of any two or more people.

Furthermore, if the driver's BAC is higher than .18 when he or she causes the death of anyone, he or she will also be guilty of a Class B felony. Repeat offenses are subject to a Class A felony. All defendants in the above cases must serve at least 85 percent of their sentence to be considered for parole.

Missouri's criminal code now grants a more proportionate punishment for drunk drivers whose carelessness results in the loss of innocent life.

Protecting our children from sexual predators

To help people identify potential child predators, SB 73 allows county sheriffs to publish photographs of registered sex offenders online.

Photographs are not considered public record, but this bill makes an exception in the case of sex offenders. If more people have access to what known sexual predators look like, we could prevent some devastating tragedies from ruining lives.

Protecting our state from the perils of meth

Cold and sinus medicines are intended to cure our ailments, but there are people who use the pseudoephedrine found in these remedies to produce methamphetamine, an extremely addictive drug.

Senate Bill 10 aims to reduce meth production in Missouri by limiting how much medicine, such as Sudafed and Actifed, customers can buy. The bill requires that those medicines in tablet form (not gel-cap or liquid) be distributed only by pharmacists or licensed technicians. All purchases will be logged for police inspection.



Sen. Larry Gene Taylor and Sen. Norma Champion, co-sponsor of SB 10, review the legislation.

Protecting minors from alcohol use and abuse

Missouri's current law enables minors to escape legal prosecution if they drink, as long as they do not get caught. Judging by the rising number of underage drinkers, this loophole needs to be closed.

Under SB 402, any minor who is visibly drunk or has at least a .02 blood-alcohol content level is guilty of a misdemeanor. Parents allowing minors other than their own children to drink on their property would be subject to a misdemeanor, and anyone who makes or sells fake IDs will be guilty of a Class A misdemeanor.

These changes help address the serious consequences that can result from underage drinking.

Bills Passed



Bills Failed

Adult Entertainment-HB 972 enacts restrictions on adult-oriented businesses.

Bike Safety-SB 372 enacts several bicycle-friendly provisions. Budget-HBs 1-13 appropriate \$19.2 billion for state programs and services.

College Funding-SB 252 provides in-state college tuition status to family members of soldiers stationed in Missouri.

Conceal Carry-HB 365 allows costs of concealed weapon permits to be covered by county sheriffs.

Defense-SB 252 creates Missouri Military Preparedness and Enhancement Commission.

Drug War-SB 254 criminalizes prescription sharing on school property.

Early Education-SB 500 retains "First Steps" program, which provides early intervention for developmentally challenged infants and toddlers.

Environment-SB 225 revives 50-cent-per-tire fee to help clean up used tire dumps.

Finance-SB 270 expands state loan program lending resources from \$360 million to \$720 million.

Jobs-SB 343 provides incentives for businesses looking to relocate to, or expand in, Missouri.

Law and Order-HB 353/972 clarify indecent exposure law; repeal early release of non-violent criminals; strengthen other criminal penalties.

Marketing-SB 355 creates the Missouri Wine and Grape Board.

Medicaid-SB 539 revises program eligibility process; makes some services subject to appropriations. Mediation-SB 168 creates a process to resolve disputes over alleged residential construction defects.

Parks Funding-SJR 1 resubmits parks and soils tax to voters every 10 years, beginning in 2006.

Public Health-SB 74 bans all but trace amounts of mercury in vaccines for young children and pregnant women.

Public Health-SB 95 requires lead abatement contractors to maintain liability insurance.

State Retirement-SB 202 ends practice of certain state employees receiving pensions for as little as one day of work.

Sales Tax-HB 64 makes an annual three-day state sales tax holiday.

Symbology-HB 33 designates the North American Bullfrog as the official state amphibian.

Tax Relief-HB 229 eases application/expands eligibility for Missouri Homestead Preservation Act.

Telecommunications-SB 237 makes the process of being declared a competitive phone market easier.

Telecommunications-HB 209 caps municipal landline phone taxes at 5 percent; allows franchise taxes on cell phone companies.

Theft-SB 378 allows free replacement of up to four stolen license plate tabs each year.

Utility Rates-SB 179 allows utility companies to more easily recover added energy costs.

Abortion-SB 2 would make civilly liable anyone transporting a minor across state lines to obtain an abortion without informed consent.

Abortion-SB164 would prohibit public funds for health and social services programs that subsidize abortion services.

Adult Entertainment-SB 32 would enact taxes on adult-oriented businesses.

Auto Retailing-HB 265 would require dealers to provide warranties on used cars.

Banking-SB 215 would prohibit banks from charging ATM fees to people without accounts.

Campaign Finance-SB 201 would remove cap on campaign contributions.

Cloning-SB 160 would prohibit human cloning, and thereby design, embryonic stem-cell research.

Gambling-SB 195 would remove loss limit, increase admission fee, raise gross receipts on casino boats.

Gambling-HB 560 would limit state casino licenses to 13.

Helmet Law-SB 12 would allow motorcyclists over 21 to ride helmet-less.

Law Enforcement-SB 113 would allow civilian review boards to investigate local law enforcement agencies.

Law Enforcement-HB 184 would increase beer, wine and whiskey taxes to fund law enforcement and drug/alcohol abuse programs.

Lawmakers-SB 151 would take state health insurance from state legislators.

Midwifery-HB 36 would allow anyone presenting proof of training and experience to provide midwife services.

Prescription Drugs-SB 39/SB 75 would provide prescription drug coverage for those whose income levels had qualified them for state assistance, but are too high for federal eligibility.

Privacy-HB 666 would prohibit unauthorized photography of livestock farms and dog-breeding facilities.

School Funding-SJR 18 if passed by voters, would prevent courts from setting school funding.

Stadium Funding-SB 269 would allocate funds from "athletes and entertainers tax" toward renovation of publicly owned sporting venues.

Telemarketing-SB 132/HB 89 would include cell phone numbers on state's "no-call" list.

Tenant Rights-SB 300 would apply various standards to mobile home parks.

Transportation-SB 31 would allow for construction of toll roads provided Missouri voters approve a similar constitutional change (SJR 11).

Vehicle Safety-SB 221 would allow police to stop vehicles for seat belt violations.

Voting-SB 54/SB 4 would prohibit straight ticket ballots.

Voting-HB 762 would replace absentee voting system with advance voting.



Sen. Taylor and the 32nd District's Sen. Gary Nodler shared many of the same legislative priorities.



Sen. Taylor (far right), State Treasurer Sarah Steelman and fellow lawmakers discuss SB 270, which keeps Missouri tax dollars in Missouri.

Cleaning up Missouri's Travel Club Industry

The Show-Me state is home to an abundance of fun, picturesque and one-of-a-kind destinations. In Southwest Missouri specifically, we have something to be proud of. With the Ozarks, historical monuments, natural attractions such as Table Rock Lake, and Branson's live shows and recreational opportunities, Southwest Missouri is clearly a gold mine of tourism magnets.

Because tourism is such an important part of Missouri's reputation, economy and quality of life, the industry needs to be protected to ensure its vitality.

This is why the Legislature so willingly passed a measure I sponsored to polish up Missouri's tourism industry.

I drafted Senate Bill 274 to rid the tourism industry of travel clubs that fail to follow through



with promised show tickets and discounted hotel rooms to their customers.

The bill requires travel clubs to register with



the attorney general and fulfill certain requirements to renew registration. It also allows consumers to cancel their contracts and be refunded if they change their minds within three business days.

The measure covers time shares and other vacation-planning businesses that have membership fees of at least \$750.

We are protecting consumers and guaranteeing that they will get what they pay for or be reimbursed. Consumers will now see their concerns addressed appropriately and efficiently.

Regulating travel clubs will help us get rid of the disreputable companies that threaten the reliability of the tourism industry.

To Contact the 29th Senate District Office:



CALL:
Capitol Office Phone
(573) 751-9806
FAX:
(573) 751-2451

WRITE:

Room 426, State Capitol Bldg.
Jefferson City, MO 65101
ON THE WEB:
www.senate.mo.gov/taylor



Janet Ritter
Administrative Assistant



Pam Gilmore
Legislative Assistant

Meet the 29th District Staff

